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SUBJECT: TOGO'S OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL: INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS AND PKOS

REF: LOME 386

11. SUMMARY: The Togolese officer candidate program is progressing towards regionalization by accepting students from the sub-region, and strives to prepare cadets for PKO missions. The curriculum now includes modules on human right principles. The teaching staff tailors instruction to prepare students for more complex missions with an international dimension. END SUMMARY

Background

12. L'Ecole de Formation des Officiers des Forces Armees Togolaises (Officer Candidate School or EFOFAT) was created in 1995 by President Eyadema. Situated in Pya, on the outskirts of Kara (415 kms north of Lome), the school is nestled in the heartland of ethnic-Kabye territory, literally in the backyard of Eyadema's presidential palace.

13. While initially set up to train only Togolese officers, since 1998 EFOFAT has expanded its officer candidate corps to include students from the sub-region, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Mali, Niger, Chad, CAR and Guinea-Conakry. Since its creation 150 students have graduated from the school. While originally open only to male officer candidates, women have been admitted since 2006. EFOFAT is primarily an Army school -- Air Force and Navy officer candidates generally seek admission to French military academies. (Note: Togolese officers are not required to attend EFOFAT and can instead elect to attend a regional African school or a French or German military academy. End Note.)

14. Students are recruited from amongst university graduates holding a two or four year degree (license or maitrise). The average age for first year students is 22. No prior military training is required, but many students are graduates of Togo's Military school (College Militaire Eyadema), located nearby in Tchitchao (reftel). Officer candidates must be single and childless. The training program was recently reduced from three years to two years. At graduation the students are given the rank of second lieutenant. (Note: The average military career in Togo lasts 35 years. End Note.) Following graduation, all new second lieutenants are required to attend a nine month practical training program (Ecole d'Application d'Infanterie Motorisee.) This program gives the junior officers training and preparation for combat-type situations and gives them hands-on experience with heavy military equipment.

¶5. At graduation students are rank ordered by a combination score of academic and practical exercise grades. The top ranked student is then asked to select his specialization (i.e., infantry unit, commando, heavy weapons, etc.) from the slots available. The runner-up picks next and the process continues until all students have been placed.

A more international dimension and focus

¶6. EFOFAT is striving to be recognized as the regional military training academy for West Africa, but must compete with programs in Senegal (Thies) and Cote d'Ivoire (Bouake) for that status. Today instruction is primarily dispensed by Togolese officers with the support of a few French instructors who are "advisors". The curriculum is evolving and is now largely geared towards making junior officers ready for PKOs and inculcating human rights principles. In fact, regional military integration and collaboration are considered so important that President Faure has symbolically baptized the new class "African Union".

Graduation

¶7. The eleventh class of EFOFAT officers graduated on July 124. While only twelve students actually graduated, seventeen had originally enrolled in August 2006, but four died in car accidents and one was dismissed as a result of his accident related injuries. The twelfth class currently in training has 25 cadets including two women. (Note: Pol/Mil officer attended the graduation ceremony. End Note.)

TWINING